

WORKING PAPER

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The DCI Role in "Warning" and Crisis Management

I. Some Definitions

- A. Current Intelligence is that intelligence relating to events -- the facts, the background, the reasons why, the projection of what is likely to happen or could happen in the short term, and, above all, the significance for US interests.
- B. Warning is that element of current intelligence that relates to the short-term projection noted above, especially when an important US interest may be seriously affected or threatened. Under this definition, warning can extend from such things as political instability in an LDC that can threaten US lives or business interests to an increase in the price of OPEC oil, to the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East, to Soviet mobilization in Eastern Europe.
- C. Strategic Warning is that element of warning as defined in "B" above that relates to the possibility of military involvement of the US and/or its allies with a foreign power (in practice, the USSR and its East European allies, China, or North Korea). It will be noted that some warning situations can evolve into strategic warning situations, as in the 1973 war. In fact, we (and the Soviets) normally think of the threat of hostilities with the Soviet Union arising out of a situation of political tension, presumably resulting from the escalation of a crisis of less major proportions. Nevertheless, strategic warning also includes warning of the so-called bolt from the blue nuclear attack.
- D. Tactical Warning is that element of strategic warning that relates to the immediate outbreak of hostilities, e.g., the movement of ground forces across a frontier or the actual launch of ICBMs. Tactical warning is a DoD responsibility and is outside the scope of this paper.

- E. Crisis Management for intelligence refers to those activities conducted by the Intelligence Community to assist the national authorities in the period from the first provision of warning (of developments of major concern to the US authorities) to the period of tactical warning.

Question: Is this framework valid?

II. Responsibilities of the DCI

- A. It is well established that the DCI is responsible for provision of national intelligence, i.e., that intelligence needed by the President and the NSC for the formulation of policy. It is generally accepted that this responsibility includes the provision of current intelligence and of warning. Most would also agree that the DCI is responsible for strategic warning, that being the principal reason that his job was established. But at least some would argue that at some undefined point the responsibility for strategic warning should pass to the DoD. It is my view that the DCI's responsibility for strategic warning extends to the point that tactical warning is provided.
- B. The DCI's responsibilities in crisis management, whether in a situation calling for warning or strategic warning, are:
- 1) to participate in the NSC/SCC deliberations;
 - 2) to provide intelligence analyses needed by the NSC/SCC;
 - 3) to provide periodic situation reporting to the NSC/SCC, usually to the concerned departments and agencies in Washington, and often to major US commands overseas and our allies; and,
 - 4) to adjust the deployment of intelligence collection resources to meet the requirements of the crisis.

E.O. 12036 envisages a possible transfer of the DCI's tasking authority to the Secretary of Defense at some point in the development of a crisis. If we accept the view that the DCI is responsible for strategic warning until the virtual outbreak of hostilities, such a transfer should not take place until that time or shortly before.